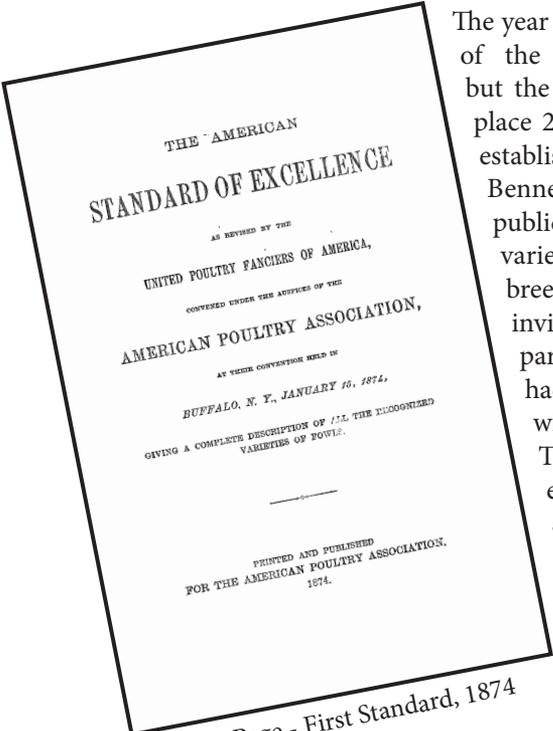


The American Poultry Association  
140th Anniversary



THE AMERICAN  
STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE  
AS REVISED BY THE  
UNITED POULTRY FANCIERS OF AMERICA,  
CONVENED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE  
AMERICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION,  
AT THEIR CONVENTION HELD IN  
BUFFALO, N. Y., JANUARY 16, 1874,  
GIVING A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF ALL THE RECOGNIZED  
VARIETIES OF FOWLS.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED  
FOR THE AMERICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION.  
1874.

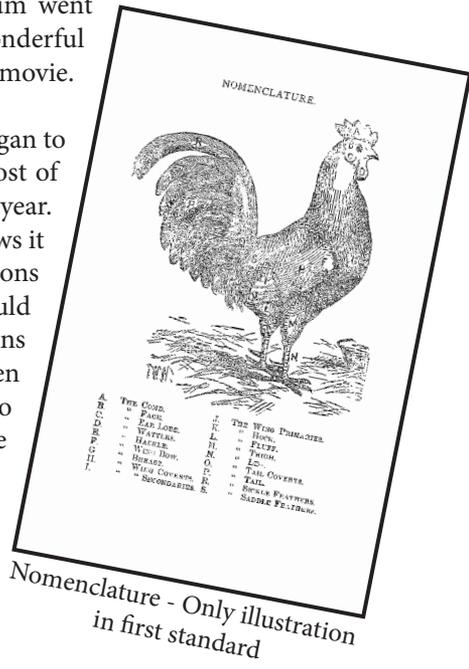
Title Page - First Standard, 1874

The year 2013 marks the 140th anniversary of the American Poultry Association, but the first known poultry exhibit took place 24 years before the APA was even established. In October of 1849 Dr. J.C. Bennet announced in an agricultural publication that he was to display twelve varieties of full blooded fowl (pure breeding ) at an exhibit in Boston and invited anyone with like varieties to participate. Up until this time poultry had only been displayed at fairs along with other agricultural products. This was the first poultry only exhibit in North America. It was scheduled for Thursday November 15th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm but there was so much interest in the event that it was extended to 2 days. When completed an estimated 10,000 people attended this show that saw 219 exhibitors exhibit 1423 birds. It was thought at the

time that one of the reasons that this show received so much publicity with newspapers all over the country was that Daniel Webster was one of the exhibitors showing 7 domesticated wild geese and a pair of Java Fowl. One year later on November 12, 1850 the second show in Boston was held. Every known variety was exhibited by the 400 exhibitors with over 12,000 birds shown. Because of the large number of birds entered attempts to judge the complete show were abandoned. The numbers and diversity of the entries at this second Boston show emphasized the need for show rules and a guide book for the judge to use to place the entries. Daniel Webster was not the only prominent figure involved in the development of the poultry industry in the United States in the 1800's. Other politicians such as the governor of Massachusetts George Briggs and the famous children's author L. Frank Baum also had a great impact on the popularity of poultry in the 19th century. In 1882 Baum wrote *The Book Of Hamburgs* for the *Poultry World* magazine where it appeared in installments from July to November. It was released as a book in 1886 and became one of the first published breed books in America. He was elected to the Executive Committee of the APA in January 1880 at

the seventh annual meeting. In 1900 Baum went on to write his most popular book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* that became the classic 1939 movie.

During the 1850's poultry organizations began to form in different parts of the country. Most of these organizations would have a show each year. Because of the distance between these shows it became necessary to have written descriptions of the different varieties so the judging would be consistent. As more poultry organizations began to form and communication between the shows grew, illustrations began to circulate of the ideal specimen. These descriptions and illustrations were the forerunner of the American standard that would soon appear. In 1867 an American version of the English standard was published in New York by A.M. Halstead. An expanded edition was reprinted in 1871. Because of the treatment of the new Plymouth Rock breed in that edition, W.H. Lockwood of Hartford, Conn. introduced a new standard later that year. This new book had better printing and organization than the Halstead version. With all of this in the background an informal meeting was held in Boston in January 1873 for the purpose of forming an American poultry organization. It ended with the promise to reconvene the following month in Buffalo, New York. It was at this meeting in February 1873 that the American Poultry Association was organized.

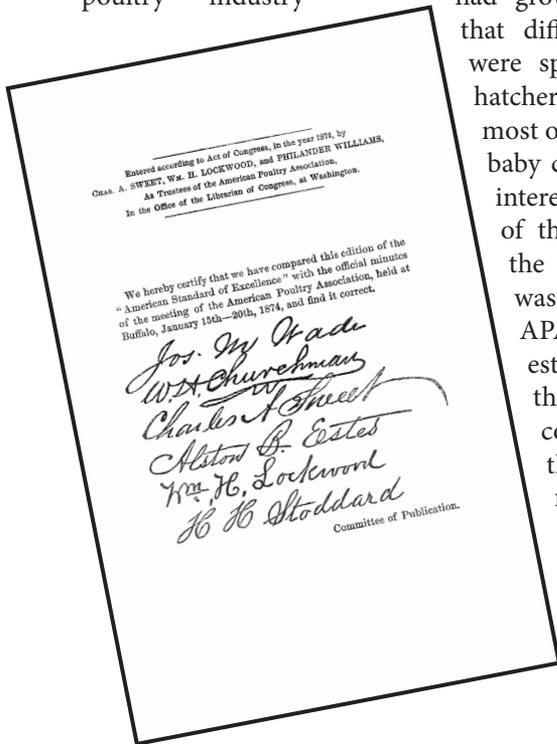


The first order of business for the newly formed organization was to address the need for a workable Standard. To accomplish this task, a committee of six men was formed and developed the first Standard of Excellence. It was adopted by the American Poultry Association at their meeting on January 15, 1874 in Buffalo, New York and became the official guidebook for poultry judging in North America. The first Standard described 46 breeds of poultry, some with multiple varieties. It totaled 102 pages and became very popular with breeders and fanciers as well as Judges. In January of 1875 the A.P.A. released a new edition of the Standard of Excellence that was much larger and more complete than the original publication. It contained 243 pages and described 79 breeds and varieties. The name was changed from the Standard of Excellence to the Standard of Perfection with the 1888 edition. It was not an easy task for the early Standard revision committees to complete a

revision. Communication was slow so meetings were held some lasting up to three weeks. The first Standard had only one illustration and until the early 1900's only a few drawings identifying points, disqualifications and defects had been included. Up until this time most of the illustrations had been seen as unsatisfactory but this changed with the 1905 edition. Since that time every edition has included many illustrations of the ideal specimen due to the emergence of several talented poultry artists the most recognized being Arthur O Schilling. The first colored feather illustrations appeared in the 1910 edition but were not included again until 1953. Thirty years later in 1983 the first full color edition was released thanks to Brad Atwood the chairman of the Standard Color Committee. He and his committee coordinated its development and secured the sponsorships needed for the original color paintings that were to be used in this historic edition. Through all of this the Standard of Perfection has evolved into what it is today, nearly 400 pages of descriptions, diagrams and colored illustrations of all breeds and varieties of standard bred poultry. The American Poultry Association has been publishing the Standard of Perfection for over 135 years with the current 2010 edition being its 43rd copyrighted printing.

In the early part of the 20th century the American Poultry Association was nationally, the most dominate organization in the poultry industry. In 1902 an attempt was made to turn the APA into more of a trade association representing all poultry interests, both commercial and exhibition. The poultry industry

had grown and diversified to the point that different segments of the industry were specializing in specific areas. The hatchery industry had become huge but most of the board of directors felt that the baby chick business was not in the best interests of the poultry industry. Because of the many different opinions about the future of the industry a proposal was brought before the board at the APA convention in 1915 that would establish different departments within the Association that would favor the commercial poultry industry. One of the proposed departments was to be for baby chicks. The board decided against these new departments and to continue to focus on its interests in the superiority of standard bred poultry and it's judging.



Because of this action the APA lost some of its stature in the commercial industry but remained the premiere Association in the standard bred poultry industry which continues to this day. The 1920s saw the interest in exhibiting poultry continuing to increase. In 1925 there were 300 major poultry shows nationwide not including fairs and junior shows. The largest show of that time was held in New York City in January of each year at Madison Square Garden. Other important shows were held yearly in Chicago, Boston, Portland and Kansas City. Along with these major events and many local shows, most state and county fairs of that era also had poultry exhibits.

It would be impossible to mention all the major projects or historical accomplishments that have taken place in the long history of the Association but through all that has transpired it has evolved into what it is today. The premiere organization for all standard bred poultry. It is the oldest livestock organization in North America and continues to work to improve standard bred poultry confirmation and judging. Many changes have taken place in the 140 year history of the APA. The membership demographic has moved from what was once said to be an “old man’s club” to an organization for all ages and genders. It has a solid and well run youth program and a judges licensing program that has seen both men and women of all ages become qualified judges. Then of course the Standard of Perfection, one of the key reasons why the organization was formed so many years ago, continues to be revised and improved to meet the changing times. The one thing that has not changed over the years is the dedication of the many members and officers that have worked endlessly for the betterment of the poultry fancy and the Association. The APA has survived the hard times and flourished in the good times but has been able to continue as an organization because of the willingness to change its course, sometimes reluctantly, when needed. By continuing in this fashion and embracing the technology of the 21st century the American Poultry Association should have a bright future.

John Monaco  
District 8 Director

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